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Senior Seminar

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Sound and Fury

Arms, legs, hair, nails, boots collide in a frenzy. Bodies move erratically and almost primally. Everyone has given into the rhythm and thick, heavy haze of sound covering the room, fully uninhibited. A sweat dappled floor welcomes you home with every new drop that mixes together on the cement like the silhouettes in front of the stage.

These photos are an exercise in abstraction as well as an attempt to broaden my photographic practice outside of being purely representational. Through the overlapping of limbs and bodies and the disorienting motion of the crowd I've attempted to create something that shows these environments in a new and interesting way. The collage pieces are also an exploration into broadening my practice beyond in-camera technique and opening it up to more editing and digital manipulation. This project takes its name from a hardcore and punk music festival in Los Angeles, and is an exploration of the crowds, bodies, forms and violent movement that all blend together to the soundtrack of blasting drums and screaming guitars.

A subculture can become a second home for many, including myself. My own experience lies in the sensory aspect of Punk and Hardcore. As a premature twin born from a Cesarean section, I was connected to tubes, monitors, gauges and sensors before I could even see the world around me. My struggle with sensory input manifested itself early in life and hasn't gone anywhere since. Pressure and tactile sensations could send me into a panic or simply just

anger me. Finding myself in a musical subculture so heavily involving tightly packed crowds and violent movement however, did not bring about these negative sensations. I could relinquish control and empty my mind while my body just moved in response to those around me and the music that tied us all together. What should have been the most uncomfortable space for me soon became where I felt most comfortable, among the chaos and flying legs and arms.

The community provided by these environments hasn't always been a nurturing one. In punk specifically there is a long history of racism, sexism, misogyny and violence intermixed with community based activism and countercultural efforts. As someone within these scenes in the present day it is not only impressive how much more queer, non-white, and non-male the spaces have become but also the way that the internet has changed a street based and typically guerilla scene into one spanning the globe and hundreds of countries through social media.

When beginning this project I initially wanted to focus on these aspects of the scene, the community, social advocacy and aid, and newfound inclusivity. However, after a few short weeks of making the same photos again and again, eventually hitting a wall and moving in a new direction with some help from friends and faculty. Inspiration came in new forms, manga, specifically the intensely graphic and insanely detailed Berserk by the late Kentaro Miura, as well as from contemporary photographers also focusing on their local hardcore and punk scenes. This second point in particular helped me return to my own scene at home in Rochester NY, hundreds of miles from where I thought my work would take me.

Abstraction was not an easy technique for me to pick up. From when I began photographing my work was always representational. From landscapes and portraiture to music documentation and street photography, I felt most comfortable when capturing what was in front

of me and showing those photos as they were shot. As this project began to take form my comfort with warping representation and collapsing space also increased. Instead of looking from afar I found myself even more immersed in the crowd than I had been as a member of it. Extremities and clothing began to fill compositions in ways I'd never seen before and that only pushed me further into abstraction. By maintaining deep, almost void-like blacks and bright white highlights, my aim was to push the abstraction of easily identifiable objects and bodies into a more contrasted form. What started as fully fleshed figures in a collective experience melted away and broke down, leaving only hints of movement, sound, and fury.

















